SALVATION FROM SIN.

THE END OF

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY

JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES.

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"Leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."—Heb vi. 1.

I. HOLINESS THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF THE ATONEMENT.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world *to save sinners*." From WHAT does he propose to save them? A few plain texts of Scripture will answer this question.

On the first page of the New Testament it is written, "She [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS [Saviour] for *he shall save his people from their* SINS." Matt. 1:21. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*." Rom. 8:3, 4. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, *that he might sanctify and cleanse it*." Eph. 5:25, 26. "You, that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, *to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight*." Col. 1:21, 22. "Who gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity*." Titus 2:14. These texts explicitly declare the object of the mission and sacrifice of Christ to be the salvation of his people, not merely or primarily from the consequences of their sins, but from their sins themselves.

Dividing salvation into two great parts, viz., forgiveness of past sin, and purification from present sin, it is plainly implied in nearly all the declarations of the Bible touching the subject, that the latter part is the *primary*, and the former the *secondary* object of

the work of Christ. This appears in the above quotations. Purification was so much more prominent than forgiveness in the minds of the New Testament writers, that their language in those passages, and many others, would almost lead to the conclusion that it was the *only* object of the atonement. The promise of the new covenant, as quoted by Paul in Heb. 10 : 16, 17, exhibits both parts of salvation, in their proper order of importance. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; *I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;* [this is purification;] *and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more:*" [this is forgiveness.] It is true that forgiveness, in the order of time, necessarily precedes purification. The past must be forgiven, before men can be saved from the present and future power of sin. Hence we find salvation set forth in the following manner: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just *to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" 1 John 1 : 9. Here the order of the actual process of salvation is exhibited: 1st, confession; 2d, forgiveness; 3d, purification. But it is obvious that forgiveness, instead of taking precedence of purification in importance, only bears the relation to it of means to an end. God pardons us that he may cleanse us. Forgiveness is the foundation of purification; but purification is that, without which forgiveness would be worthless, as a foundation would be worthless without a superstructure.

When, therefore, Christ is called the "Lamb of God, *that taketh away the sin of the world*," we understand the language as meaning more than that by the atonement he has provided for the *forgiveness* of mankind, and so has taken away the legal *consequences* of sin. The "*taking away of sins*" is spoken of in Heb. 10 : 4, as equivalent to a cleansing, by which the conscience is *purged from sin*, and by which "the comer thereto is *made perfect*." The apostle says that the sacrifices of the law could not effect this cleansing; but he holds up the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, as able thus to "take away sins." His language is: "By the which will [the will of God executed by Christ on the cross, which will is given to believers by the Holy Spirit], we are *sanctified*, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Ver. 10. And again, "By one offering he hath forever

perfected them that are sanctified." Ver. 14. This language certainly ascribes a *purifying* power to the atonement, and, indeed, in such a way as wholly to eclipse its purchase of forgiveness. It is said in 1 John 3 : 5, that Christ "was manifested *to take away our sins*," and the meaning of the expression is clearly determined by what immediately follows: "*Whosoever abideth in him* SINNETH NOT; *whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*" He "takes away sin" in such a way, that they who avail themselves of his sacrifice do not *commit sin*.

This view of the object for which Jesus Christ came into the world and laid down his life, and this view alone, justifies us in calling the message which came by him, "*the glorious* GOSPEL *of the blessed God.*" A "gospel" is *good news*, "*glad tidings of great joy.*" Luke 2 : 10. But Jesus Christ brought no *news* to the world, if his message was merely or chiefly a proclamation of *pardon*. Forgiveness had been promised to the penitent from the beginning of the world. God had proclaimed himself to Moses and the children of Israel, "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." Ex. 34 : 6, 7. The "glad tidings of great joy" which the angels represented as coming with the birth of Christ, were in fact tidings of things well known to the prophets and patriarchs, if they related only to the pardoning mercy of God. But if Jesus Christ came proclaiming not only the mercy of God in pardoning sin, but also his power to cleanse and preserve from sin; if in addition to the forgiveness which was given to the patriarchs and prophets, he proposed to clothe believers with the robe of righteousness; in a word, if it was, as we have shown, his peculiar office to "*save his people from their sins*," then truly he brought "good news" to the world —his message is worthy to be called "the glorious gospel."

II. THE SINS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS IRRELEVANT.

It is obvious that the doctrine of salvation from sin, thus exhibited, is not liable to any objections drawn from the experience of saints who lived *before the manifestation of Christ*. We do not

rely at all upon the use of the word *perfect* in reference to Noah, Job, &c.; and we have no occasion to prove that any of the "Old Testament saints" were free from sin. On the contrary we admit, nay we insist, that salvation from sin "was unknown to the ages and generations" of the Jewish dispensation, and was revealed only after the coming of Christ. We draw a very broad line of distinction between the dispensation before, and the dispensation after the manifestation of Christ. To adduce the sins of Moses and David, as proof that the gospel does not give entire salvation from sin, is to overlook altogether this distinction of dispensations, and in fact to assume that Jesus Christ brought no new blessings to the world. This is as absurd as it would be to undertake to disprove the realities of the wonders effected at the present time by steam power and the art of printing, by referring to facts that occurred a thousand years ago. For we affirm, and have shown, and shall show more abundantly, that the coming of Jesus Christ effected a revolution in the condition of mankind with reference to spiritual privilege, as great as was effected in mechanics and letters, by the discovery of steam power, and the invention of the press.

The Old Testament saints did indeed foresee the coming of Christ, and rejoice in view of the blessings he was to bring. The prophets foretold that a "way of holiness" should be cast up; that a "new covenant," securing obedience, should be given to God's people; that they should be "sprinkled with clean water," and "a new heart and right spirit" should be given them. But that this foresight did not by any means amount to a *possession* of the salvation of the gospel, is very evident from the following declaration of Peter: "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; *receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls:* of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of *the grace that should come unto you:* searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should* FOLLOW. Unto whom it was revealed, that NOT UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO US, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, *with the Holy Ghost* sent down from heaven." 1 Pet. 1: 8–12. This passage represents the saints of the

primitive church as *receiving* "a salvation of their souls," which the Old Testament prophets only *foretold* as about to come *after the sufferings of Christ.*

But an objector may ask, "Were not the Old Testament saints saved?" We answer, Yes; but not till Christ came in the flesh. Paul, speaking of the whole line from Abel downward, says—"These all, having obtained good report through faith, *received not the promise*, God having provided some better thing for us, *that they* WITHOUT US *should not be made perfect.*" Heb. 11 : 39, 40. Perfect holiness (and of course salvation) was given to the saints in this world and in the spiritual world at the same time; and it was not given to either, till the reconciliation of the divine and human natures was effected by the incarnation and death of Christ.

"But the Old Testament saints certainly had faith; and was it not *saving* faith?" It was saving in this respect—it kept them from despair, and from such gross transgressions as would have sealed their ruin, and gave them a *hope*, more or less clear and joyful, of ultimate, complete redemption; but it did not save them from sin—it did not put them in *possession* of that which they hoped for. "They died in faith, *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.*" Heb. 11 : 13. Their faith, like a cable that connects a ship with the shore, connected them with a *future* salvation. The *end* of their faith, the shore which they hoped for, was perfect holiness; but that shore they never reached, till after "the sufferings of Christ"—the outpouring of the blood of the new covenant. Then the saints on earth and in heaven "*received* the end of their faith, even *the salvation of their souls.*"

"Were not the Old Testament saints *born of God* till the times of the new covenant?" No; for Christ was the "first-born" among all his brethren; (Rom. 8 : 29;) "the head of the body, the church; *the beginning, the first-born from the dead.*" Col. 1 : 18. The saints that lived before his manifestation, were *heirs* of a future sonship; *i. e.*, they had the promise of God that they should be made partakers of the divine nature at a future time. They were thus *prospectively* "children;" but *experimentally* they were "*servants*," and did not receive the spirit of adoption till the introduction of the Christian dispensation. All this is plainly set forth in the following passage: "The heir, as long as he is a child, *differeth nothing from a servant*, though he be lord of all; but is

under tutors and governors, *until the time appointed of the father.* Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But *when the fullness of the time was come*, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son." Gal. 4 : 1–7. The line of division between the servant dispensation, and the son dispensation, clearly lies where God sent his Son into the world, and, after his sufferings, poured out the Holy Spirit.

In denying that the Old Testament saints were born of God, we must not be understood as denying that they had any religion. It appears by the passage above quoted, that there are *two distinct stages in religious experience*, in the first of which men may properly be called *servants* of God, while yet they are not *sons*. It is important that this distinction should be clearly seen, and constantly kept in view. We admit, and teach, that the Old Testament saints were *servants* of God in the ages before Christ, and that they became *sons* at his coming.

"But what is the difference between servants and sons? Did not the Old Testament saints *love* God?" Yes; and so many servants love and honor their masters, while yet there is no *vital union*, no *blood-relationship* between them. So there was no *vital union* between God and man, till Christ came in the flesh. Abraham was called the *friend* of God, and he doubtless loved God as a man loves his friend; but it is not said in scripture, and it is not true, that *Christ was in him*; that he *dwelt in God, and God in him*. This spiritual indwelling was "hid from ages and from generations," and was manifested only after the mission of Christ. Col. 1 : 26, 27. It is this that brings men into *blood-relationship* to God, so that they are entitled to the name of "sons of God."

It is written, "*Every one that loveth is born of God.*" 1 John 4 : 7. You admit that the Old Testament saints loved God; does it not necessarily follow that they were born of God?" No; for while we admit that they loved God as a man loves his friend, we deny that they loved him "*with all their heart*," and this is the only kind of love that is approved by the

law. Any measure of love short of this, however useful it may be in its *external* effects, and as a *preparation* for ultimate holiness, is not love in a *legal* point of view, and is not *the* love which John had in mind when he said, "He that loveth is born of God;" for he subsequently defines the love which constitutes men sons of God, thus: "*God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him.*" Ver. 16. Here it appears that the love of which John is speaking is not a friendly feeling originating in a man's own heart, but the love of God "*shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost;*" it is love which man can never manufacture by the working of his own will, but which must be attained by dwelling in God, who alone loves with the strength required by the law. This kind of love was not in the world, till Christ reconciled and identified the divine and human natures.

"But were not the Old Testament saints partakers of the Holy Spirit?" They were, in an inferior sense. The relation which they sustained to God, of servants or friends, did not exclude them from his favorable regard and from his spiritual blessing. There was undoubtedly such fellowship of spirit between them and God, as may exist between friends. They were instructed, guided, and comforted by the Holy Spirit. But this communion was not radical enough to make them *one with God*. They were affianced, but not married. Their fellowship with God was not *continuous*, and as compared with that which is given by the new covenant, was *external*. It could not be said of them, that they dwelt in God and God in them. It is evident that they were not partakers of the *same* power of the Holy Spirit, as that given under the Christian dispensation, from the following passage: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for *the Holy Ghost was not yet given*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7: 37–39.

The Old Testament saints had enough of the Spirit's influence to give them that hopeful faith which we have described. Still it is true, that the *principal* moral influence under which they lived was *the law*; and "the law made nothing perfect." Heb.

7 : 19. Indeed it was not the design of the law to save men from sin, but simply to keep them within the reach of the ultimate spiritual agency of Christ: just as the sheepfold is not intended to wash the sheep, but to keep them within such bounds that the shepherd can take them and wash them himself. So far as the law produced any *direct* effect on moral character, it increased rather than diminished sin. It "entered THAT *the offence might abound*," Rom. 5 : 20. This effect was nevertheless subservient to the general design of the legal dispensation, which was to *prepare* men for the subsequent spiritual dispensation: since the law, in aggravating sin, ripened *conviction*, and so made men sensible of their need of an almighty Saviour. The preparatory character of the legal dispensation is set forth in the following passage: "Before faith came, we were *kept under the law, shut up unto the faith* which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our *schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster: for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3 : 23–26.

We conclude, from this view of the condition of the Old Testament saints, that their sins cannot be pertinently alleged as objections to the doctrine of salvation from sin.

III. THE SINS OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES, DURING HIS PERSONAL MINISTRY, IRRELEVANT.

We are not yet past the difficulties of our doctrine. The objector may still allege, that sin remained in "the saints" *after* the coming of Christ. It is manifest that the disciples, while Christ was with them personally, were not free from sin. They exhibited a hasty and bigoted zeal, in proposing to call fire from heaven to consume their opposers. Luke 9 : 54. Carnal ambition and childish rivalry appeared among them. Luke 9 : 46. At the cross they all forsook their master: and Peter, the boldest and most devoted of them, thrice denied him with cursing and oaths. "All this shows (the objector may say) that salvation from sin did not come into the world with the coming of Christ." We admit the facts, but deny the inference. In order to show that the sins of the disciples during the personal ministry of Christ,

have no force as objections to our doctrine, we will now bring to view more distinctly than we have yet done, the process by which salvation from sin is effected, and ascertain more exactly when the Christian dispensation commenced.

The gospel is "the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God." 1 Cor. 1 : 24. In other words, salvation is effected by two agencies, viz. the Spirit and the truth. The Spirit is the living *agent* in the work, and the truth is its *instrument*. 2 Thess. 2 : 13. 1 Pet. 1 : 22, &c. Now the question is, at *what time* in the history of Christ's mission, were these two agencies, *in the gospel cause*, introduced and applied? We grant that partial measures of the Spirit and the truth were given to men in all ages. Yet it is true in an important sense that "grace and truth came only by Jesus Christ;" John 1 : 17 : so that the question is pertinent and intelligible — *When were the Spirit and truth provided by the Christian dispensation, given to mankind?* We have already seen a plain intimation in the passage quoted from 1 Pet. 1, that the gospel of present salvation went forth subsequently to "*the sufferings of Christ*," Ver. 11. That gospel is also specially characterized by the fact that it was "preached *with the Holy Ghost* sent down from heaven." Ver. 12. We know that the Holy Ghost as promised for the "last days," was not sent down from heaven till after the "sufferings of Christ." "*The Holy Ghost was not yet given* [i. e. during the personal ministry of Christ,] *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*." John 7 : 39. "*When he ascended up on high*, he led captivity captive, and [having thus secured a channel for his spiritual power] gave gifts unto men." Ephesians 4 : 8. "*If I go not away*," said Jesus, "the Comforter [i. e. the Spirit of the Christian dispensation] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16 : 7. Thus it is plain that the *spiritual* agent of salvation which Christ came to give the world, was not in the world at the time when the disciples were guilty of the sins alleged against them.

Neither were they at that time in possession of the *truth* by which salvation is effected. The *death* and *resurrection* of Christ are the great facts employed in the salvation of souls. These are the things "reported" in the gospel—the *instruments* of the Holy Spirit. "Brethren," says Paul, "I declare unto you the *gospel*,

which I preached to you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; *by which also ye are saved.* [What is that gospel? The apostle answers:] I delivered unto you, *first of all*, that which I also received, how that Christ *died for our sins*, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that *he rose again* the third day, according to the scriptures." 1 Cor. 15: 1–4. Accordingly, the same apostle charges Timothy to remember the resurrection as the principal matter of his gospel. (2 Tim. 2: 8.) and makes belief in the resurrection the very basis of salvation. Rom. 10: 9. In fact Paul's gospel was briefly this: "Christ died, rose from the dead, ascended on high, and sent forth the Holy Spirit. By that Spirit we are baptized into Christ and made partakers of his spiritual condition; so that *being crucified with him, we are dead to sin, and having risen with him, are live to holiness.*" See Rom. 6: 1, &c.; 2 Cor. 6: 14–16; Eph. 1: 19. Now it is evident that this gospel *could not* be preached until Christ had died and risen. Even if the Holy Spirit had been given before, it would not have had its *instruments*. The facts necessary to salvation were not in existence.

It is manifest that Christ did not enter upon his office as a savior from sin till after his death, from a great variety of such passages as the following: "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; *and being made perfect*, [i. e. by the death of the cross,] *he became the author of eternal salvation* to all them that obey him." Heb. 5: 8, 9. "Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator: *for a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*" Heb. 9: 16, 17. In accordance with the doctrine of these passages, Christ speaks of the "new covenant," or what is the same thing, the covenant of salvation from sin, as being "*in his blood*." (Luke 22: 20.) and intimates that his blood must be shed, before men could partake of the blessings of that covenant.

The sins, then, of the disciples, before the death of Christ, stand on the same ground with the sins of the Old Testament saints. They occurred before the Christian dispensation began; i. e. before the introduction and application of the great agencies of salvation, viz., the *Spirit* of adoption, (see Gal. 4: 6,) and the *truth* concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. We must look

to the period subsequent to the day of Pentecost, for test-examples of the nature and extent of Christian salvation.

That the disciples were not Christians in the proper sense of that term, during Christ's personal ministry, is evident from the language Christ used toward Peter. In one instance he called him *Satan*, (Mark 8 : 33,) and in another instance he said to him, "*When thou art converted*, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22 : 32,) implying that he was not then converted.

What has been already said of the condition of the Old Testament saints, as servants under the law, and heirs of the future blessings of the gospel, may be applied, without any essential alteration, to the condition of the disciples before the day of Pentecost.

IV. THE SINS OF BELIEVERS, DURING THE APOSTOLIC AGE, IRRELEVANT.

Finally it may be objected to our doctrine, that the saints of the apostolic age, though they lived after the death and resurrection of Christ and the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and were therefore certainly subjects of the Christian dispensation, did nevertheless commit sin. This objection is more pertinent and formidable than any that have gone before. We come to the issue now on gospel ground. The apostolic age is certainly the period, where the question whether the gospel gives salvation from sin in this world, is finally to be tried. We admit, if it can be shown that *none* of the saints of that age were saved from sin, our doctrine, by the test of experience, is proved false. And on the other hand we insist, if it can be shown that *any* in that age were saved from sin, by the same test our doctrine is proved true. Dismissing from our minds, as irrelevant, the history of the saints of all ages before, and of all ages since, we will now bring the gospel to the test of the experience of the primitive church.

In many cases, the power of an agency is not to be estimated by its *immediate* effects. The healing efficacy of medicine, for instance, is not to be judged by the symptoms which it produces instantly after being taken. We must wait till it has had time sufficient for a legitimate operation. We affirm that the gospel is a medicine competent to the complete cure of sin. That medi-

cine (at least, the principal element of it) was given to the primitive church on the day of Pentecost. But it does not necessarily follow that on the day of Pentecost, or within any very short period afterwards, it exhibited its full efficacy. The process by which full salvation is effected, is one that requires time, because it is not merely a spiritual operation, but an exhibition and application of *truth*. The office of the Comforter is to "*take of the things of Christ and show them unto believers.*" John 16 : 14. On the day of Pentecost it *began* its work, but it did not immediately show the disciples *all* the things of Christ. They then entered the school of the Holy Spirit, but they did not graduate in one day. They were evidently then, and for a long time afterwards, in a great measure, ignorant of the true nature of the kingdom of Christ. It was ten years after the day of Pentecost before they understood that they were at liberty to preach to the Gentiles, though Christ expressly commissioned them to "teach all nations." In many other cases, the things which he had spoken to them they did not apprehend at once, even after the Comforter had come, but they were "brought to their remembrance" from time to time; *e. g.*, Acts 11 : 16. Their introduction to the truth of the Gospel was progressive, and it began with the most simple external rudiments. They preached at first the death of Christ as a reason for repentance, and his resurrection as proof of his Messiahship; but there is no reason to believe that they perceived the deep spiritual meaning and efficiency of those great facts of the gospel.

It cannot be repeated too often, that salvation from sin is effected by the spiritual application of the death and resurrection of Christ. Believers, beholding these facts by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, receive the assimilating impress of them. Christ's death becomes their death, and his resurrection their resurrection. Thus they die to sin and live to God. Until these facts are thus apprehended, the *truth* of the gospel has not had its operation, though the *Spirit* of the Christian dispensation may have been received. Let us look at a specimen of Paul's preaching on this point. "Know ye not," says he, "that so many of us as were baptized [*i. e.*, by the Holy Spirit] into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from

the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; [this would not follow if the apostle were speaking of water baptism;] knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, *that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin.* Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. *For sin shall not have dominion over you.*" Rom. 6:3-14. Here we have Paul's gospel—"Christ crucified, the power of God unto salvation" from sin. But is it not evident that the truths exhibited in this passage, are among the deepest of "the deep things of God;" spiritual problems, the solution of which would naturally engage the primitive church a long time? It is certainly supposable—indeed, Paul's language plainly implies—that believers might have been baptized into Christ, long before they were aware that their baptism involved death to sin, and resurrection to holiness. The apostle addresses them, as persons who had taken the medicine of salvation, but had not digested it and realized its legitimate operation. Though they were baptized into Christ, they had not reached that radical spiritual identity with him, by which the body of sin is destroyed. The Holy Spirit was *upon* them, but had not yet *pervaded* them. Accordingly Paul, as a servant of the Holy Spirit, held up before them the things of Christ, viz.: his death, and resurrection, exhorting them to *reckon* themselves identified with him, that so they might realize his victory over sin.

Interesting as the inquiry is, we cannot, perhaps, determine at present, exactly at what period in the history of the primitive

church, these deep salvation-truths were manifested to the saints. But we may safely assume that it was long after the day of Pentecost. All the evidence there is in the case, goes to show that Paul first apprehended and preached salvation from sin, by spiritual identity with the death and resurrection of Christ. His writings alone present an extended and systematic exposition of that salvation. If it was given to him, first to know and preach the "mystery of godliness"—Christ in the saints, crucified and risen again—then we must reckon the beginning of salvation from sin from his ministry; and he was not called to faith and apostleship till months, and probably years after the day of Pentecost.

However this may be, it is sufficient for our purpose to assume (what we believe the evidence and reasoning before us authorize us to assume,) that the development of the truth of the gospel in the primitive church after the day of Pentecost, was progressive; that it began with external rudiments, and, proceeding inward, reached the deep spiritual mysteries of the kingdom of God which contain the power of salvation, only at an advanced period of the apostolic age. With these principles in view, it is obvious that the only fair way of judging the power of the gospel, is to look for test-examples to a period later than the day of Pentecost, and to that class in the primitive church who had received the truth of Christ in the maturity of its development.

V. HOLINESS ACTUALLY ATTAINED BY SOME IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

Admitting as we freely do, that in the early days of the apostolic age, sin still had place in the church; admitting that years after the effusion of the Spirit, "Peter was to be blamed," and James was obliged to say, "In many things we offend all;" still we maintain that the time came at last when they that continued in Christ's word reached the mighty truth of the atonement, and by it were "made free"—that Christianity, when its power was fully revealed, "made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness." We are fully sustained in this position by the 1st Epistle of John. That epistle was among the latest writings of the New Testament, and as such, is just the testimony we need to determine what was the power of Christianity, when its fruit

was ripe. Taking that epistle by itself, disencumbered as it ought to be of the experience of Jewish and semi-Christian saints, it is impossible to avoid the conviction, that the theoretical and *practical* standard of religion there exhibited was PERFECT HOLINESS. John lived to see the full light of that day of righteousness, which began to dawn when Christ came into the world. "*The darkness*," said he, "*is past, and the true light now shineth*." 1 Epist. 2 : 8. What were the discoveries which he made in the broad daylight of Christianity? Let us hear his own testimony. "This is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH US from ALL SIN." 1 : 5–7. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we KEEP his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 2 : 3, 4. "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, *purifieth himself, even as he is pure*. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness, *is righteous, even as he is righteous*. He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 3 : 2–10. "Herein is our love made *perfect*, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: *because as he is, so are we in this world*." 4 : 17. "We know that *whosoever is born of God sinneth not*; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one

foundeth him not." 5 : 18. If this is not Perfectionism, we know not how, by any human language, Perfectionism can be expressed.

We are aware that all this testimony—the very burden of the whole epistle—is counterbalanced in many minds by one little text that occurs in the first chapter, viz., "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" 1 : 8. But a candid survey of the context cannot but satisfy any discerning person, that this text was not designed to militate against the doctrine of salvation from sin. Let us look at what goes before it. The apostle, having entered into full fellowship with Christ's victory, *in advance* of the mass of the church, turns toward those who are following him, and announces the *consequences* of that fellowship. "This then is the message that we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth us from all sin.*" Ver. 5, 7. Perfect holiness, then, is the result of the fellowship which he professes to have entered into himself, and which he proposes to them. He next proceeds to state the *terms* of admission to that fellowship; and first, he bars out the self-righteous: "If we say *we have no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." In other words, "Jesus Christ proposes to cleanse us from all sin. Now if we say we have no sin to be cleansed from—if, *before availing ourselves of his saving power*, we rest in our own innocence, and deny our need of his salvation,—we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Then comes the alternative: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, *and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" It is obvious that the confession in this verse is antithetical to the denial in the verse before, and that both are referable to persons in the same stage of experience. But the confession certainly is represented as *preceding* that forgiveness which Christ offers to sinners. Of course the denial is to be referred to those who have not yet accepted Christ's offer. The apostle supposes two ways in which his message may be treated. 1. Some may say they have no sin, and therefore have no need of salvation from sin; these he condemns as self-deceivers. 2. Others may acknowledge their sin and need

of salvation; to these he promises pardon and perfect holiness. The verse in question is guarded from perversion by plain declarations standing immediately before and after it, that Christ proposes to cleanse those who receive him, "*from all sin—from all unrighteousness.*" Its simple object manifestly is to assert the universal sinfulness of mankind without Christ, and to cut off (as Paul does in the first part of the epistle to the Romans) the hopes of those who entrench themselves in their own righteousness. We think it not uncharitable to say that they who persist in construing this verse as opposed to the doctrine of salvation from sin, and in regarding it as sufficient to offset all the plain assertions, scattered through the whole epistle, that perfect holiness is the only standard of true Christianity, belong to that class of persons who "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

But we need not rely exclusively on the 1st epistle of John for proof that the gospel, in its mature development, gave full salvation from sin. If our theory concerning the progressive nature of the spiritual experience of the primitive church is correct, we may naturally expect, in examining the records of that church, to find, *after* the period when the great salvation truths concerning the death and resurrection of Christ began to be seen and preached, evidence of the existence of *two distinct classes of believers.* While the mass of the church, and especially the new converts who were added to it from time to time, might yet be in a carnal state, not having apprehended the truth that makes free from sin, there might still be a class of older and more spiritual believers, who had entered into full fellowship with Christ, and thus had attained perfect holiness. In the writings of Paul we find proof that this was actually the case. "We speak wisdom," says he, "among them that are *perfect.*" 1 Cor. 2 : 6. It appears by what follows that he uses the word *perfect* in this case to describe those who had attained *complete spirituality, i. e.* had overcome the flesh, and were in full fellowship with Christ. "The natural man," he says a few verses after, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is *spiritual* [this is the class whom the apostle calls *perfect*] judgeth all things, yet *he himself is judged of no man.* For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? *But we have the*

mind of Christ." Ver. 14–16. We perceive by this passage, that there was actually a class in the primitive church, and Paul was one of them, who were *above human judgment, and had the mind of Christ.* It is evident that they were perfectly *holy*, and that this is the sense in which they were *perfect* and *spiritual*, from the contrast which follows: "And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto *spiritual*, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal. *For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and dissensions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*" Chap. 3: 1–3. Thus the perfection of Paul and of those among whom he spoke wisdom, stands opposed to the imperfection of those who were yet subject to sinful passions; it is therefore perfection of *holiness.* The following are instances of the use of the words, *spiritual* and *perfect*, in the same way. "Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual* restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Gal. 6: 1. "Let us therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded." Phil. 3: 15. However carnal then the primitive church may have been as a mass, and in its early days, it is manifest that in Paul's time there was a class within it who were properly denominated *perfect.* It is also manifest from what we have before said, that this class became more and more numerous and distinct, as the harvest time of the apostolic age approached, till at last, when John wrote his epistles, Perfectionism was fully developed, and had become the acknowledged standard of Christian experience.

Thus we have shown, first, that salvation from sin, present and future, was the great object of the mission and sacrifice of Christ; secondly, that the sins of the Old Testament saints cannot fairly be adduced as evidence against this doctrine, because they were committed before Christ came into the world; thirdly, that the sins of the disciples during Christ's personal ministry, cannot be so adduced, because they were committed before the death and resurrection of Christ, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit; fourthly, that the sins of many in the primitive church after the day of Pentecost, cannot be so adduced, because they were committed before the truth concerning Christ's death and resurrection

was fully developed and applied; and fifthly, that according to the testimony of Paul and John, Christianity in its maturity, did actually make some believers perfectly holy in this world.

VI. PAUL AN EXAMPLE OF SALVATION FROM ALL SIN.

In support of the general argument which we have presented, we will now adduce an individual instance of perfect holiness. And our specimen shall be the apostle Paul. It has already been seen that he belonged to the class of those who were called *perfect*. By a more particular examination of the testimony concerning him, we propose to show that he was saved from sin in this world. For this purpose, we will in the first place notice and explain several passages in which he is said to have confessed sin; secondly, answer the specific charges commonly made against him; and thirdly, produce positive proof that he was holy, from his own testimony.

I. PAUL'S SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS.

(1.) In the seventh chapter of Romans the apostle says: "I am carnal, sold under sin; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. . . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7: 14–24. This passage, taken by itself, would seem to be a very explicit confession of sin. Indeed it is a confession of unmitigated, all-controlling depravity. If it is to be admitted as a description of Paul's *Christian* experience, it evidently proves that he was far below even modern Christians in spiritual attainments, or at least in profession; for the very lowest standards of the most fashionable creeds make *some degree* of righteousness the test of Christian character; whereas, according to the above confession, Paul was *completely* carnal, a prisoner of sin bound hand and foot; utterly unable to perform any good thing. He does not say with modern imperfectionists, that he is *occasionally* overcome by sin, but that he is "*sold under sin*." Most persons admit that the hard saying of John in 1 Epis. 3: 8, means as much as this—that "he that committeth sin *habitually*, is of the devil."

But that text, even thus reduced, gives no quarter to this experience of Paul, for he confesses himself *uninterruptedly* sinful. Before consenting to the intolerable conclusion that Paul was "a child of the devil," the reader we think will be willing to examine critically the context and scope of Rom. 7 : 14–24. For this purpose, we offer him, in the following exposition, such help as can be given in a condensed form ; but it will be effectual only as he faithfully follows every step of it with careful thought, and studies the whole subject for himself.

The previous doctrine of the epistle concerning the *law*, is set forth in the following passages : "By the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*." Chap. 3 : 20. "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect ; *because the law worketh wrath*." 4 : 14. 15. "The law entered *that the offense might abound*." 5 : 20. In accordance with these views of the effect and design of the law, in the sixth chapter the apostle closes his exposition of salvation from sin by the gospel, with the following declaration : "Sin shall not have dominion over you ; *for ye* [*i. e.* as many as were baptized into Christ, see ver. 3] *are not under the law, but under grace*;" (6 : 14 ;) as though, if they were under law there would be no hope of deliverance from sin. These are the views which are discussed and fully explained in the seventh and a part of the eighth chapter. The substance of the first six verses of the seventh chapter may be stated thus : "The law is our husband while we are in the flesh, and the only offspring of this first marriage is sin. Christ is our husband, when we are baptized into him, and the offspring of this second marriage is righteousness. We cannot have both husbands at once. Death to the law must precede marriage with Christ. Accordingly, we that believe, are dead to the law, by baptism into the death of Christ." In the 7th verse the apostle commences a vindication of the law. In view of the foregoing doctrine, that sin is the fruit of marriage with the law, some might say that the law itself is sin. But Paul insists that the evil nature of the offspring in this case is not to be attributed to the husband, but to the wife. The law is holy, just and good, but the subjects of it being filled with the spirit of sin, only make the law an *occasion* of aggravated iniquity. Ver. 13. Here commences the disputed paragraph, vers.

14–25: "*For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal*, sold under sin. . . . . The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do," &c. It is plain that the apostle is here giving the reason for the fact that the law produces sin. That reason is the opposition which exists between a carnal nature and the law. A marriage between them brings forth sin and death, because the parties are "unequally yoked." "The law is *spiritual*, but I am *carnal*; of course the fruit of a union between me and the law must be strife and irritation, resulting in aggravated sin and ultimate despair on my part, though the law is holy, just and good." Paul's *supposed* confession, then, is actually a description of the misery of a soul married to the law. Now we know that a person in that state is not a Christian; for, to be married to the law and to Christ at the same time, would be that very spiritual polygamy which in the first verses of the chapter is expressly condemned. Moreover in the 4th, 5th and 6th verses, the apostle plainly and repeatedly speaks of his own state, and that of those whom he addressed, as opposite to the law state which he afterwards describes. "*Ye are become dead to the law* by the body of Christ. When we *were* [past tense] in the flesh, the motions of sins, which *were* by the law, [*i. e.* those very motions which are described in verses 14–25,] *did* work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. *But now we are delivered from the law*," &c. Paul, then, was not, at the time he wrote the epistle, under the law, and therefore did not describe his experience as a Christian, in the paragraph in question. He uses the present tense in that paragraph, because he is not relating historical facts, but is illustrating a perpetual principle, without reference to time. The present tense and first person are frequently used in such illustrations, because they are convenient and forcible. The actual experience of Paul as a Christian, is fully exhibited in the eighth chapter, which begins thus—"*There is therefore now* NO CONDEMNATION *to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" The intelligent reader will perceive, by examining this chapter and comparing it with the seventh, that the peace of the second marriage is the exact reverse of the misery of the first.

(2.) The following passage is often quoted as an instance in which Paul confessed sin: "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:* but I follow after, if that I may ap-

prehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, *I count not myself to have apprehended*," &c. Phil. 3 : 12, 13. But we shall see by consulting the context, that Paul is wholly misunderstood by those who take the passage by itself and construe it as an acknowledgment of *moral* imperfection. In the preceding verses Paul says, "I count all things but loss . . . that I may know him and *the power of his resurrection*, and the *fellowship of his sufferings*, being made *conformable to his death*; if by any means I might attain unto the *resurrection of the dead*: [here begins the supposed confession:] not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." It is obvious that "the *resurrection of the dead*," not perfect holiness, is to be understood as the object of the verb "attained" in this sentence; so that the first clause certainly is not a confession of sin, but simply of a state of mortality. But in what sense does Paul say, "Not as though I were already *perfect*?" We must find an answer by looking back and noticing what he was striving to attain. He counted all things but loss, that he "might know the power of Christ's *resurrection*, and the fellowship of his *sufferings*, being made conformable to his *death*." He was not perfect then in this sense, namely, he had not yet entered into full fellowship with Christ's death and resurrection. Does this imply that he was a sinner? If so, it implies also that Christ himself was a sinner, before he died and entered into immortality. The word *perfect* is used in three instances with reference to Christ, evidently in the very sense in which it is used in this confession. "Go, tell that fox," said Jesus, "Behold, I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be *perfecte I*:" [*i. e.* by the death of the cross.] Luke 13 : 32. "It became him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings*." Heb. 2 : 10. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made *perfect*, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Heb. 5 : 8, 9. Now no one supposes that Christ was less than perfectly *holy*, while he was in the flesh. Yet these passages plainly teach that he was in some sense "made perfect" by suffering, and consequently that in some sense he was *not perfect* till his death. Previous to that event then, he might have said, as

well as Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." And on the other hand Paul, as well as Christ, notwithstanding this confession, could claim to be in another sense perfect; as in fact he does a few verses after, where he says, "Let us, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded."

The truth is, Paul knew he was "apprehended of Christ" for all that Christ had himself attained, viz., the resurrection of soul and body; and though he was already saved from sin, he did not count himself perfect by full fellowship with those sufferings which made Christ perfect, but acknowledged in opposition to those "who said the resurrection was past already," (2 Tim. 2: 18,) that he was yet "following after," looking, as he says a few verses below the passage in question, "for the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall CHANGE our VILE BODY." The imperfection which he acknowledges, so far as it related to spiritual character, was a deficiency, not of holiness, but of experience. A man cannot learn patience without suffering. Previous to the requisite suffering, imperfection in this respect is not voluntary but necessary. It is therefore not a moral, but a natural deficiency, and may be predicated of one who is perfectly holy, as we have seen it was predicated of Christ.

(3.) We are sometimes referred to 1 Cor. 9: 27, as evidence that Paul acknowledged imperfection. The passage with its context stands thus: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: *lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*" It is difficult to see how this can be tortured into any thing like a confession of sin. On the contrary, it is actually an assertion of faithfulness. In order that the passage may accord with the common views of the seventh chapter of Romans, and with the experience of imperfectionists, it must be reversed thus: "I run *uncertainly*, I fight *as one that beateth the air*, and I do *not* keep my body under, but am frequently brought into subjection to it." The most that can fairly be said of it is, that it indicates the existence of some fear in the apostle's mind that he might be a "castaway." But even this is by no means a necessary construction. A soldier in a besieged fortress might say, "I keep within the walls, lest I should be slain by the enemy's artillery," with-

out expressing any fear or suggesting any probability that he would actually be slain.

(4.) Paul's account of the "thorn in his flesh," which the Lord gave him, "lest he should be exalted above measure," (2 Cor. 12 : 7.) is often cited as a confession of imperfection. It is indeed an acknowledgment of weakness, and of a certain liability to sin ; which liability however was provided for and extinguished by the means which God employed in the case. Paul does not say that he *was* exalted above measure, but on the contrary, that God took measures to keep him from being so. Doubtless those measures were successful. The thorn in the flesh certainly was not in itself something sinful in him. It was "a messenger of Satan" sent, not to lead him into sin, but to "*buffet*" (*i. e.* to afflict) him. He besought the Lord that it might depart from him, and the answer was, "My grace is *sufficient* for thee : for my strength is *made* PERFECT in weakness." The thorn then was the harbinger, not of sin, but of sufficiency and perfection. So thought Paul. "Most gladly therefore," says he, "will I rather *glory* in my infirmities, [certainly not in sin,] that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

(5.) The following passage is supposed by some to be a confession of present sinfulness : "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom *I am chief*." 1 Tim. 1 : 15. The context plainly shows that the apostle here refers, not to his character after he became a Christian, but to his wickedness in persecuting the church. See ver. 13. "Howbeit," he continues, "for this cause I *obtained* [past tense] mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering," &c. His pre-eminent offense in "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the church, rendered him fit to be an example of the greatness of God's mercy. In respect to his state as a Christian, he says just before, that Christ counted him "faithful :" which is altogether inconsistent with the idea that he was at the same time the chief of sinners.

Thus we have noticed all the passages in Paul's writings which are commonly adduced to prove him a sinner by his own direct testimony, and we have found in every one of them proof to the contrary.

As a sequel to this branch of evidence, let the reader take a survey of all the *prayers* which Paul represents himself as offering. In almost every epistle he gives samples of his petitions; and if he had been habitually as abundant in confessions of sin as modern imperfectionists, he would certainly have left some specimens on record. We venture to predict, however, that nothing of the kind will be found.

II. SPECIFIC CHARGES AGAINST PAUL.

(1.) *His contention with Barnabas.* The account of this affair is as follows:—"Some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of God, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought it not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God." Acts 15: 36–40. We observe upon this, in the first place, that there is no certain evidence that either Paul or Barnabas sinned. A mere difference of judgment, wisely permitted for the purpose of separating them, may have been perfectly consistent with *unity of heart*. "The contention was so sharp between them [not that they abused each other with words or blows, but] that they departed asunder one from the other," and probably by mutual consent, in peace. But we observe further, that so far as there is any probable proof that either sinned, it goes to impeach the character of Barnabas only. John, about whom the contention arose, was Barnabas' nephew, (see Col. 4: 10,) who doubtless was influenced by partiality for him, as his kinsman, and "determined to take him with them," without first consulting Paul, or heeding his counsel afterwards. No reason is given for Barnabas' determination; whereas Paul "thought it not good" to take John, *because* he had once deserted them. It is plain that Paul acted conscientiously in the matter. Nothing but prejudice or carelessness can discover the least evidence in these circum-

stances, that he departed from integrity; while candor finds fresh proof of his wisdom and firmness.

(2.) *His anathema upon the high priest.* — "Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Acts 23: 1–5. There was manifestly no sin in the mistake which Paul made respecting the official character of his abuser. He acknowledged no *sin*, though he showed a perfect and manly readiness to acknowledge a mistake, as well as a conscientious self-possession, in quoting scripture for the acknowledgment. The chief question is, have we evidence that he was *sinfully* angry in this affair? Admitting that his words bespeak anger, we assert that he was not "angry *without a cause*." The unrighteous conduct of the high priest called for righteous indignation. Anger is not in every case sinful. See Mark 3: 5, Eph. 4: 26. Paul's accusers must therefore show that he was unreasonably angry. This cannot be shown from his language in the case. He neither smote the high priest, nor threatened to smite him. "*God* shall smite thee, thou whited wall." Is this an expression of a revengeful spirit? It is only a calm and true prediction of the righteous judgment of God. He used the language of Christ in the severe appellation which he gave the high priest. See Matt. 23: 27. He did not avenge himself, but recognized the truth, that vengeance is the Lord's.

We may remark in general upon these charges, and upon all others of the kind, (if others have been made,) that they are mere private judgments, unsupported by Paul's confession, (who must be supposed to have known his own character better than his accusers, and to have been ingenuous enough to confess sin, if he had committed it,) and unsupported by the verdict of the inspired writers who have recorded the acts for which he is condemned. Moreover, this method of trying character by private judgment

of external actions, without hearing the defense of the accused, might as fairly be used to prove sin upon Christ as upon Paul. The external form of Christ's actions was, in many cases, far from being lovely—at least to the carnal apprehensions of the Pharisees. Our belief that he was perfectly holy, certainly is not founded on our perception of the righteousness of every particular transaction of his life. We never feel that there is any occasion for us to inquire whether he did right or wrong in this or that particular action—whether every movement of his body and mind through all his life, was measured and determined by the rule and plummet of theoretical morality—whether he preached and labored for sinners just exactly as much as he was able, and never slept the fraction of a second too much or too little. If it were necessary to go through such a process of scrutiny before we could lawfully believe that Jesus Christ was perfectly holy, we might well despair of ever proving that he was the Son of God. But all such questioning is utterly foreclosed, as every man's consciousness must testify, by the simple fact that Jesus Christ was proved to be the Son of God, by his Father's power. We reverse the process. Instead of arguing that he was the Son of God because his external actions were perfectly holy, we argue that his external actions were perfectly holy because he was manifestly the Son of God, in full fellowship with his Father. Now we insist that Paul's character ought to be tried by a similar process. If it can be shown that he was in spiritual union with Christ, it ought to be *presumed*, unless full proof to the contrary is produced, that all his external actions were righteous, and the "evil surmises" of irresponsible accusers ought to be given to the winds.

III. PAUL'S VIEWS OF HIS OWN CHARACTER.

(1.) He asserts his *identity with Christ*, in such passages as the following: "It pleased God . . . to *reveal his Son in me*." Gal. 1: 15, 16. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*." Gal. 2: 20. "*For me to live is Christ*." Phil. 1: 21. "*We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones*." Eph. 5: 30. "*We have the mind of Christ*." 1 Cor. 2: 16. In accordance with this testimony, he says that the Galatians received him "as an angel of God, *even as Christ Jesus*;" (Gal. 4: 14;) and instead of rebuking them for man-

worship, he rather censures them for not continuing thus to honor him.

(2.) He plainly asserts his *freedom from sin*, as the consequence of his union with Christ, in the following passages: "How shall *we that are dead to sin*, [*i. e.* by baptism into Christ's death,] live any longer therein?" Rom. 6: 2. "The law of the Spirit of life *hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*" Rom. 8: 2. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, *how holily and justly and unblamably* we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1 Thess. 2: 10. "*Giving no offense in any thing*, that the ministry be not blamed: but *in all things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, *by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.*" 2 Cor. 6: 3–7. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that *in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.*" 2 Cor. 1: 12.

(3.) His writings, instead of being filled with confessions of sin and unfaithfulness, every where abound with *vindications of his own conduct, bold assertions of his righteousness, and appeals from human accusation to the judgment of God.* The following may serve as examples: "We have wronged no man, we have defrauded no man." 2 Cor. 7: 2. "*I think to be bold against some which think of us as though we walked according to the flesh:* for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh." 2 Cor. 10: 2, 3. "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor of guile: . . . neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; *God is witness:* nor of men sought we glory, nor of you." 1 Thess. 2: 3–6. "Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind. . . . . I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men." Acts 20: 18–26. "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment. . . . . He that judgeth me is the Lord." 1 Cor. 4: 3–5.

(4.) He constantly proposes his own life as a perfect example for imitation. "I beseech you," says he, "*Be ye followers of me.* For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, . . . who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ." 1 Cor. 4 : 16. "*Be ye followers of me* as I also am of Christ." 1 Cor. 11 : 1. "Brethren, *be followers together of me*, and mark them that walk so, as ye have us for an ensample." Phil. 3 : 17. "Those things which ye both have learned and received, and heard and seen *in me*, do : and the God of peace shall be with you." Phil. 4 : 9. Let the reader imagine for a moment, how these exhortations would sound in the mouth of one who was in the condition described in the seventh of Romans. The last of them would amount to this :—"Ye have learned and received (viz. in Rom. 7 : 7—25) that I am carnal, sold under sin, doing the evil that I condemn, and unable to do the good which my conscience enjoins. Follow me in these things ; live in slavery to sin as I do, *and the God of peace shall be with you!*"

The testimony now before the reader, both negative and positive, should be weighed in connection with the fact that Paul unreservedly *preached perfection* to the churches ; (for examples see 2 Cor. 13 : 9–11, 1 Thess. 5 : 23, 24 :) and that he made it the main object of one of his most important epistles, viz. that to the Hebrews, to exhibit Christianity as a dispensation of perfect holiness. (See Heb. 5 : 1 ; 6 : 11–19 ; 10 : 14–19, &c.)

In view of all this we must conclude, either that Paul was filled with self-deception, impenitence and pride, and that his life was altogether at variance with the theory which he preached, or that he was a genuine example of salvation from sin.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION FROM SIN.

Objection 1. "If perfect holiness is attained, there is no further occasion for *repentance*." Answer. Repentance is genuine only when it results in the *forsaking* of sin. That periodical repentance, which implies continuance in the sins repented of, is most horrible hypocrisy. The doctrine of perfect holiness does indeed discard this kind of repentance. But it preaches to all sinners—and that too with a sincerity and vehemence which be-

long to no other doctrine—that scriptural repentance, which needs "*not to be repented of*," 2 Cor. 7 : 10. There are things which, though it is very necessary that they should be done *once*, ought not to be done the second time. For instance, it is absolutely necessary that the farmer should plow his field in the spring. But he would be a very foolish man, who should continue plowing the same field all summer. So, thorough repentance is essential in the seed-time of grace, but works of righteousness must follow, or the harvest of judgment will bring no reward.—They who repent all their days, because repentance is good in its season, will be obliged to say at last, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Paul was a faithful preacher of repentance ; yet he said to his converts, "Leaving the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, let us go on to perfection, *not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works*," &c. Heb. 6 : 1, 2.

Obj. 2. "Perfect holiness is inconsistent with *growth in grace*." Answer. This objection is predicated on a false notion of the nature of the perfection which we advocate. It supposes that one who is perfectly holy, is necessarily free from all infirmity, and has received all the strength and knowledge that God can impart. Whereas the reader will perceive, by recurring to the second and fourth sections under the head, "*Paul's supposed confessions*," that one may be perfect in *holiness*, and yet imperfect in *experience*, and subject to *infirmity*. We mean by perfect holiness, (using the expression in its lowest sense,) simply that *purity of heart* which gives *a good conscience*. This primary state is attainable by mere faith in the resurrection of Christ. It is in fact the communication of the purity and good conscience of Christ. It may therefore be received instantaneously, and it may exist in us antecedently to all external improvement or good works. There is no difficulty in conceiving that a man may have a clean heart and a good conscience, and yet be very imperfect in regard to his understanding and corporeal faculties and affections. Suppose a missionary, in urging upon a savage a change of life, proposes to take him under his own care and thoroughly instruct him in all the ways of civilization. When the savage embraces the proposal, and puts himself into the hands of the missionary, he has done all that is *now* required of him, and may rightfully have a good conscience. He

is a savage still, in every thing except his heart; but he is not to be blamed. The missionary does not condemn him for his uncouth manners, and his obtuseness of intellect. He may now enter upon the course of discipline necessary to make him in all respects a civilized man, *with a self-approving heart*. By this illustration it may be seen how a believer may be free from sin and condemnation before God, and yet be but at the entrance of the discipline necessary to complete sanctification. The difference between the two cases is altogether in favor of the believer; for whereas the missionary can only express his approbation of the converted savage by words, Christ gives the believer his own pure spirit and good conscience, and bears witness not merely *to* him, but *in* him, that his sins are taken away. Between this perfection of the *heart*, and that *glorified* perfection which Christ attained by the cross, and which Paul set before himself as the hope of his calling, the way is long and difficult enough to make occasion for all the diligence and energy which the most laborious legalist can desire.—Let the reader judge for himself whether a good or an evil conscience is most favorable to alacrity and success in the pursuit of sanctification.

Obj. 3. "The Christian life is represented in scripture as a *warfare*." Answer. It is indeed a warfare, but not a series of *defeats*. It is not necessary that we should be overcome by the devil, in order that we may resist him. Christ, while he was in the flesh, was engaged in tremendous conflicts with the powers of darkness; yet he was without sin. Paul called the warfare of his Christian life a "good fight"—an appellation certainly not befitting such a series of defeats as constitute the warfare of modern professors of Christianity. Our theory of Christian life, while it equips the spiritual soldier with a pure heart and a good conscience at the outset, nevertheless does not discharge him from service. To *keep* his heart pure and his conscience good, in the midst of a world of pollution and accusation—to follow Paul and Christ in the way to the glory of the resurrection—will cost him many and sore conflicts with his own corrupted propensities, and with "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places." We are not of those who imagine that the work of winning the glory of God, and the rest of heaven, is accomplished in a moment. We believe that all who are in any stage of spiritual

life short of the full resurrection of the body, have in their own compound nature, two opposing elements, which will war against each other till that resurrection is attained. "If Christ be in you," says Paul, "the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness;" (Rom. 8: 10;) and again, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would;" *i. e.* the desires either of the flesh or of the spirit *must* be mortified. Gal. 5: 17. A Christian is one who "walks in the spirit;" and the Apostle says expressly that such "*shall not* FULFILL *the lusts of the flesh.*" Nevertheless the lusts of the flesh *will remain as long as the body is dead*, and of course the conflict between the flesh and the spirit will remain. An enemy may remain on the borders of an empire, and trouble the inhabitants with much hard fighting, and yet never conquer the empire, or even win a battle.

Obj. 4. "I have seen an end of all perfection, but *thy commandment is exceeding broad.*" Answer. 1. The assertion in the first clause of this quotation, however true it may have been in the mouth of David, is not true in the mouths of modern objectors to the doctrine of holiness. Even though they may find an end to the perfection of all the Old Testament saints, and though they may think they have seen an end of the perfection of all modern claimants of holiness, yet they have not seen an end of the perfection of Jesus Christ, of Paul, or of the mature part of the primitive church. 2. Though we should admit that the law is as broad as the objector conceives it to be, yet we might safely say that the grace of God in Christ Jesus is still broader. But some things may be said to show that the law, as viewed through the new covenant, is not so "exceeding broad" as to place any very formidable difficulty in the way of one who wishes to be holy. A thing may be "exceeding broad" in one view of it, and exceedingly narrow in another. For instance a tree, surveyed from a point above its branches, would present a wide circle of unconnected leaves and twigs, which the inspector might well despair of ever being able to reckon and minutely describe. While the same tree, viewed from a station where its *trunk* could be seen, would be a very simple object, easily comprehended by the mind, and easily described. So the law, viewed in all the details of its

external development and with all the ceremonial additions of the Jewish economy, is vast, complicated, incomprehensible, presenting a hopeless task to the will, and a perpetual stumbling-block to the conscience. But the same law, viewed in its spiritual principle, is so simple that a child may comprehend it. It was one main object of Christianity to call off the minds and consciences of men from the branches of the law to its root. Christ condensed all the requirements of the law and the prophets into the simple rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matt. 7 : 12. Paul said, "*He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law:* for this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is *briefly comprehended* in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore *love is the fulfilling of the law.*" Rom. 13 : 8–10. And again, "All the law is fulfilled in *one word*, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Gal. 5 : 14. Thus the law, viewed through the new covenant, instead of being "exceeding broad," is as narrow as one little word, LOVE. The question before the mind of one who seeks after holiness, is not whether he can duly observe all the ordinances of the Jewish or Christian ritual, or whether he can *immediately* perform all the good works which may be conceived of as resulting from the principle of the law, when it is perfectly developed in external action, but simply whether he can *love*. If he does this one thing, the word of God authorizes his conscience to be content; for "love is the fulfilling of the law." This root of all righteousness, this cure for the conscience, is provided for in the gospel, not by the application of a written commandment, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. He that believes, loves, not by the power of his own will, but because "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost." Thus Christ, by first concentrating the whole law into the simple requirement of love, and then converting that requirement into a spiritual gift, is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The exceeding breadth of the commandment is no hindrance to one who looks not to the commandment but to Christ for salvation from sin. So much antinomianism is certainly part of the gospel.

VIII. CHRISTIAN FAITH—THE ACT BY WHICH SALVATION FROM SIN IS ATTAINED.

The gospel offers salvation from sin as a free GIFT. Of course the first thing to be done by one who seeks that salvation, is to clear away the rubbish of his *own works*. He must heartily repent, not only of his manifest sins, but of his supposed works of righteousness. All works that are not the fruit of God's life in the soul are "*dead works*," utterly loathsome to one whose eyes are open to spiritual truth. Let the inquirer settle it in his heart that "there is none good but one, that is God;" that the righteousness of every being in the universe, from the highest archangel to the lowest saint, is the righteousness of God: and of course that he is not to make himself righteous by *working*, but is to be made righteous by *receiving grace;* and he will see the necessity of setting his face toward the *at-one-ment:* spiritual union with God, instead of "doing duty," will become the object of his efforts and hopes.

In order to attain this union, its nature must first be clearly ascertained. We will therefore look at some specimens of Bible language concerning the condition of those who attained it in the apostolic age. Paul says—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*." Here is the reconciliation embodied—God and man made one. We must not explain away this testimony, by calling the language *figurative*. Spirits can dwell in each other, if bodies cannot. Paul means that the spirit of Christ (which is the same as Christ himself) actually lived and wrought righteousness in him. In another place he says, "If any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his;" and then immediately adds, "If *Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin," &c.; Rom. 8:9, 10; from which it is evident, that to have the spirit of Christ, is the same thing as to have Christ himself indwelling. The church is the "body of Christ:" and as a man's life dwells in every member of his body, so Christ dwells in every member of his church. "Know ye not your own selves," says the apostle, "how that *Christ is in you* except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. 13:5. The condition, then, for which the inquirer seeks, is one in which he can truly say—

"Christ liveth in me." The necessary consequence of that condition is perfect holiness, because Christ is perfectly holy.

We now come to the main question—How is this union, by which Christ dwells in the soul and saves it from sin, to be attained? The witnesses of the New Testament answer with one voice—BY FAITH. What we now want, therefore, is a clear definition of Christian faith.

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Every form of faith, without which it is impossible to please God, necessarily contains these two elements, viz: first, a belief of the existence of God; second, a belief of his benevolence, and of course an expectation of a reward in seeking him. The man *who has never sought after God*, may exercise faith, thus elementarily described; and indeed, in the order of nature, such faith *must* precede all attempts to secure the favor of God. I cannot seek access to a man of whose existence I am ignorant, and I shall not seek favors from one, unless I believe he has the power, and will, to do me good. Between this starting point in the race of faith, and the goal which they have reached, to whom God has become all in all, we may discover and describe endless varieties and degrees of confidence in God. If I believe to-day in the existence of a God whose locality is above the firmament, and to-morrow discover that he is an omnipresent God, I have advanced a step in the course of faith. Again: if I believe to-day only the general proposition, that the omnipresent God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and to-morrow discover that he actually answers my prayers, I have advanced another step. If I sincerely and diligently seek after God, my faith will increase as my knowledge of him increases. Discovering his care over me, I trust his providence for temporal blessings—perceiving the power of his spirit, and the holiness of his character, I trust him to keep me from the ways of wicked men. Finding that in his presence is fullness of joy, I trust his love will one day deliver me from the bondage and darkness of a sinful nature, and fit me for full and endless fellowship with himself. As God reveals his good will and power to me, my faith advances from one blessing to another, till that righteousness which alone can qualify me for the enjoyment of his glorious presence, becomes the object of my heart's

desire; and trusting in him, I see a cloudless prospect of eternal deliverance from sin in a future world.

Thus far faith advanced under the Jewish dispensation. Thus far, before Christ came, God had revealed himself as the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Abraham received not the promise of the new covenant, but saw it afar off, and rejoiced; and all who followed in his footsteps before the advent of Christ, though they "obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise," but stood with him rejoicing in the hope of eternal righteousness. The effect of faith in this stage of its advancement, upon the character and conduct, may easily be seen. As faith is necessarily limited by the revelation which God makes of himself, if Abraham diligently sought after God—if his faith kept pace with his discoveries of the good will of God—he was "perfect" in his day: not perfect, as being conformed to the image of God, but perfect as being conformed to his imperfect discoveries of God. It is manifest, however, that his perfection can be no standard by which the perfection of those to whom God has farther revealed himself, shall be measured. The legitimate effect of perfect faith in the imperfect revelations which God made to man during the Jewish dispensation, was to stimulate believers to the performance of the works of the law. In observing the statutes and ordinances of the law, they did the work of *servants*, because, in so doing, they trusted God would ultimately make them his sons. If it be true, as many seem to suppose, that God has made no greater revelation of himself to the world than was given to Abraham and the Jewish saints, we may call ourselves believers, while we rest contented to stand with them as servants under the law, in *hope*, not in *possession* of righteousness. But if Jesus Christ has revealed the Father, and this revelation is worthy to be called the glorious gospel, before we call ourselves *Christian* believers, we must inquire, What is the gospel?—and whether our faith corresponds to the tidings it brings.

We have shown that the glad tidings that came by Jesus Christ, presented to the world actual salvation from sin, and were so understood and realized by the primitive church. If this is the gospel, sinners are not *Christian* believers: for the faith which corresponds to this revelation of the good will of God,

must be inconsistent with the commission of sin. If God sent his Son into the world for the purpose of saving his people from their sins, they who trust him are saved from their sins, or God is defeated in his purpose.

What then is the nature of *Christian* faith? How shall a man who believes that God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, become a believer of that gospel which brings salvation from sin? We will endeavor to trace the transition.

Suppose the man stands in the situation of a Jewish believer, a sinner, under the law, but rejoicing in the *hope* of righteousness and fellowship with God in a future world. He hears that God sent his Son into the world to save all who trust in him from their sins. This is glad tidings to him, and he willingly believes it, because it brings that salvation to his door which he had hitherto supposed afar off. Difficulties and objections are easily removed from the mind of one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness. Suppose then his mind has settled into a conviction that the glad tidings he has heard are true. Though he is not in possession of the salvation of which he has heard, he has advanced in faith a step beyond the state of a Jewish believer. He has discovered that the feast which he before looked for at the end of a life of labor, is ready for him now. He withdraws his thoughts from that prospect beyond the grave, which had cheered him, ceases from his labor, and sets himself to find his Father's table.

The question before him now is—*How* am I to be saved from sin? The gospel answers—*by the power of God.* "But can this be done consistently with my free agency?" *Ans.* If God could dwell in Jesus Christ, controlling all his actions, yet leaving him a free agent, he can do the same in any other human being, to whom he can gain access. You know by experience, that human in some measure, at least, manage your spirit, and dispose you to righteousness, without interfering with your free agency—why cannot his control over you be *perfected* consistently with your freedom? Moreover, you expect to be kept by his power in eternal righteousness after death, and yet to be free—Why should you doubt his power to begin this work before death? Suppose the inquirer to be convinced that God can dwell in him

as he did in Christ, and save him from sin, leaving him free—a second step is taken towards the possession of a perfect salvation.

The next question is—"*How* shall I become the subject of that power of God which brings salvation?" The gospel answers, *by faith in his Son.* "What is faith in the Son of God?" *Ans.* It is a conviction, accompanied with a confession that *Christ is in you*, a whole Savior. Unbelief replies—"Christ is not in me."

Here is the critical spot where the contest between the devil and the Son of God is to be decided; and here we resort to the record which God has given of his Son. Let it be remembered that the word of God must stand, if it contradicts your previous conceptions and feelings. If it declares that Christ is in you, your ignorance and unbelief of the fact, cannot prove this declaration false. On the contrary it *may* be proved that your ignorance and unbelief have crucified the Son of God in you, and that he only waits for the permission of your faith, to burst the tomb of your heart and manifest his presence. We will not speculate upon the question of the *possibility* of Christ's presence in those who are ignorant of the fact. You cannot dive deep enough into spiritual philosophy to prove it impossible, and I cannot dive deep enough to show you *how* it is true; but we can both read the plain statements of the word of God. John says of Christ—the Word of God—"In him was life, and *the life was the light of men;* and the light shineth *in darkness*, and *the darkness comprehendeth it not.* That was the true light, which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world. He was *in the world*, and the world was made by him, and *the world knew him not.*" John 1: 4–10. From this passage it appears that the *life* of the Word of God, lighteth every human being. It will not be pretended that the gospel—the *external* light of the word of God—lighteth every man that cometh into the world. What meaning then can be attached to the passage, unless we believe that the Son of God, in becoming incarnate, gave life to *all flesh*, "came a light into the *world*" of darkened *spirits*, so that he is actually life and light to those who know him not. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Shall the darkness therefore deny that the light shines? "The world knew him not." Shall the world therefore deny that he has come into

the world. You have hitherto been ignorant of the fact that Christ is life and light in you—shall you therefore deny the fact, in contradiction of the testimony of God?

The following passage more fully unfolds the meaning of those we have already examined. "There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, *that God hath given to us eternal life:* and this life is in his Son." 1 Jno. 5: 8–11. There are three agents, or elements of salvation in the spiritual world, corresponding to spirit, (or air,) water, and blood, in the natural world. Water is that which cleanses the outside, (see John 15: 3; Eph. 5: 26,) to which the external word corresponds. "Blood is the life"—the vital element of the inward man. So the blood of Jesus Christ is the life of the soul. The spirit or air is the medium in which, and by which the blood and water have their action, and without which the blood would be useless. So the witnessing Spirit of God is that without which the blood and water of Jesus Christ, *i. e.* his spiritual life and instructions, are of no avail. "He that *believeth* hath the witness" of the Spirit. "He that believeth *not*" hath the *blood*, *i. e.* that life which is light shining in darkness, and perhaps the water, *i. e.* the word: but these are of no avail without that faith which admits the witness of the Spirit. The life of Christ is not comprehended, till the Spirit bears witness. "He that believeth not hath made God a liar: because he hath not believed the record that God gave of his Son: and this is the record, *that God hath given to us eternal life;* and this life is in his Son." The life then of the Son of God is actually and unconditionally given to every man *before believing*—else how can unbelief in respect to this record make God a liar? If God has given eternal life only to them that believe, unbelievers cannot be required to believe that God has given *them* eternal life, for this is not true. Yet it is plainly declared that unbelievers make God a liar in respect to "the record that God hath given to us eternal life." These

declarations can in no way be reconciled with each other, unless we believe that the "eternal life," *i. e.* the Son of God, (see 1 John 1 : 2 ; 5 : 20,) "is the light shining in darkness—that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Thus believing, the method of salvation by Jesus Christ is a plain matter. 1. Every man, by the gift of God, has eternal life present in his spirit, though he be ignorant of the fact. 2. God sends forth the word of his gospel to apprize men of this fact. 3. He that believeth this word receives the Holy Ghost, and is born of God. 1, The blood is given : 2, the water ; 3, the spirit. Thus God is the Savior of *all* men, *specially* of them that believe.

Again—" As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*" Rom. 5 : 18. A comparison is here instituted between Adam and Christ, in which the operation of the righteousness of the second Adam is represented as reversing the work of the first. By the first Adam all men become partakers of a fallen nature, which is nevertheless not in itself sinful, inasmuch as Christ was made in the likeness of it, and was yet without sin ; thus proving the possibility of living in human nature without sin, and thereby condemning sin in the flesh. " By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned.*" In consequence of Adam's sin, all men became partakers of a nature not necessarily sinful, but uniformly prone to sin. Each man, *by his own sin*, secures to himself the appropriate curse of a sinful nature. By reversing this statement we ascertain the nature of the work of Christ. He is the second Adam, the root of the race. By him all men are placed in communication with a nature, not in itself righteous in them, but adapted to the fulfilment of righteousness. Each man, *by his own act, i. e.* by faith, secures to himself the appropriate blessings of a righteous nature. The gospel announces to them who, by sin, are following the first Adam to death, that God has given them through Christ a new nature, the appropriate fruits of which are righteousness and peace. Unbelievers continue to follow the first Adam. Believers " put off the old man, and put on the new man"—" walk not after the flesh but after the spirit"—are saved from their sins. As there are now two Adams, so all men have two natures—the

one carnal and the other spiritual: and these are opposite one to the other. While the old man lives, the new man is crucified. When the new man lives, the old man is crucified. The old man lives by unbelief—the new man by faith. By the gospel we are made to know that God has repaired the ruins of the fall, and "we are no longer debtors to the flesh:" "Christ has come *in the flesh*"—not in a single man, merely, but in the whole of human nature. While men believe not, he is crucified in themselves. When they believe, he rises from the dead, and reveals himself a conqueror, in themselves.

Again: "the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The WORD *is nigh thee, even in thy mouth*, AND IN THY HEART: that is, the word of faith which we preach; [Paul preached Christ:] that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10: 6–9. This is a specimen of Paul's method of preaching the gospel. To those who ask, "What must we do to be saved?" he answers, Cease to look out of yourselves for the salvation you seek—turn to the light of Christ *within*: the Word of God is in your heart: when you so believe this that you are willing to confess it, you will be saved from sin.

We will now take for granted that the inquirer is intellectually convinced that according to the word of God, *Christ is in him*, and that he must believe this, in order that he may receive salvation. Now he asks—"How shall I get this faith?" We answer by an illustration. Suppose a man has in his hand a good note for a hundred dollars, which he supposes to be nothing better than waste paper. He is told that it is a genuine note. His thoughts run thus—"While I remain in unbelief, this note is worth nothing to me; if I could believe that it is genuine, I should be richer by a hundred dollars, in feeling and fact, than I am now; how shall I get this faith?" Common sense answers, By examining the note, and the character of the maker of it. The Bible is the record of the will of God, by which men are declared possessors of eternal life. Common sense teaches

any one who wishes to believe this, to examine the record and character of him who gave it. If an intelligent and careful examination of this kind does not produce faith, the reason must be sought in the spirit of the inquirer. He stands at the gate of a kingdom, into which no idols can be carried. He knows if he believes and confesses that Christ is in him, he will be severed from every object of earthly affection. Men do not readily believe tidings which cross their interests. "How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not that honor which cometh from God only." Is it asked, What shall a man do, whose heart is wedded to some earthly object, who yet desires to believe? We answer, Your case is hopeless; unless by some means you shall be brought to abandon your idol. You can never *with the heart* believe the word of God, while your heart is otherwise engaged. While the god of this world blinds your mind, the glorious gospel can never shine into it. The man who is willing to part with every thing for the knowledge of Christ, who sincerely hungers and thirsts after righteousness, will easily believe the word which announces his salvation. When an honest man gives an account of events, which even involve no special interest, his hearers believe him as a matter of course. No *effort* to believe is thought of. But how easily and eagerly do men believe when they hear good tidings touching a matter concerning which they have been anxious! If I am in a state of anxious suspense about the safety of a friend, and a messenger brings the word, "He is safe!" the eager joy of faith rushes through me like an electric shock—I have immediate peace in believing. So the gospel is no sooner heard than believed, by one who truly thirsts for the water of life. When he hears the word of God, "Christ is in you, a conqueror over sin and death!—all is safe!"—he believes at once, and believing, passes from death unto life.

If the inquirer declares himself willing to part with his idols, and yet cannot believe, we must search through his spirit again for the reason of his unbelief. Perhaps he is saying in his heart, "I would believe, if I could *feel* that Christ is in me, and I am saved:" in other words, "I will believe the testimony of my own feelings, but not the word of God." This is wrong. A right spirit says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar—God says he has given me his Son and eternal life; my feelings contradict

his record; my feelings are the liars—God is true: I know and will testify that Christ is in me a whole Savior, because God declares it, whether my feelings accord with the testimony or not." If you wish for peace and salvation by the witness of the Spirit, *before* you believe, you wish for the fruit before there is any root. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are the *consequences* of faith; the word of God, and that only, is its foundation. The man who holds the note for a hundred dollars, in unbelief, cannot expect to *feel* richer than usual, till he believes the note to be genuine; and he would be considered a very foolish man, if he should say in answer to arguments in favor of the genuineness of the note—"I feel as poor as ever, therefore the note cannot be good." Christ says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Let the inquirer understand, that believing the word of God opens the door for the admission of the living witness. It is wrong in this situation to say, "I would open the door if I could *see* him who stands on the outside." You cannot see through the door of unbelief. You hear the Savior's voice—that is enough—believe, open the door, and you shall see him and sup with him. While you are asking for sight and supper, before you open the door, Christ is suffering for your folly, knocking without.

If the inquirer is now convinced that he is not to look for peace before believing, but *in* believing; nothing is wanting to complete his salvation, but such a confidence in what his intellect perceives to be the truth of God, as will produce a *confession* that Christ is in him, a Savior from all sin. He can try his faith by such a question as this—"Am I willing without further evidence, relying solely on the testimony of God, to confess Christ a whole Savior?" Confession, or a willingness to confess Christ, is the accompaniment rather than the consequence of faith. Intellectual belief becomes an *active* principle, a belief of the heart, in the very act of confession. It is to no purpose in this spot, to make *experiments* upon God, as many have attempted to do, by undertaking to believe, while confession is withheld till the success of faith is ascertained. A whole-hearted and everlasting surrender to the faithfulness of God alone, can secure the fulfilment of his promises to faith. Such a surrender can be made

only by a confession, which leaves no way for retreat. Men are permitted to enter the kingdom only on condition of destroying the bridge behind them.

As God is true, the man who thus confesses Christ, shall be confessed of him, before the Father. His peace shall be like a river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea. By the witness of the Spirit, he shall know that he is a child of God, and that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

IX. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN.

We have shown that there were two classes of believers in the primitive church—a carnal class, not free from sin, though baptized with the Spirit—and a spiritual or perfect class, to whom alone belonged the title of "sons of God." We have shown also that the transition from the first to the second class, though not very distinctly marked in the writings of the apostles, clearly took place in individual cases as early as the middle of the apostolic age, and in greater numbers at a later period. We have ascribed this transition to the power of Christ's resurrection, apprehended and appropriated by the believer in his inmost life; and we have defined the act of faith which thus appropriates full salvation. We propose, in conclusion, to examine the records of the primitive church with a view to obtaining a more exact idea of the traits of character which distinguish spiritual from carnal believers.

1. The first point we notice is that the spiritual man has a *renewed mind.* "He that is spiritual," says Paul, "judgeth [*i.e.* discerneth] all things," 1 Cor. 2 : 15. The reason of this is that he "has the mind of Christ." v. 16. His intellect is not only under the influence of that spirit which "searcheth the deep things of God," but is assimilated to it, and acts in unison with it. He has the mind of the "new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. 3 : 10. (See also Eph. 4 : 23, and Rom. 12 : 2.) This renewed mind is strong and penetrating. Like the Word of God by which it is

created, and to which it is assimilated, it is "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," and in a certain sense we may say that "all things are naked and open to it." "We speak wisdom," says Paul, "*among them that are perfect*—even the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But *he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*, which things also we speak." 1 Cor. 2 : 6–13.

2. Another distinguishing characteristic of the spiritual man is a *loving heart*. Paul says in the sequel of the discourse from which we have just quoted: "Ye are yet carnal; *for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, [or factions,] are ye are not carnal and walk as men?*" 1 Cor. 3 : 3. He does not halve the matter. He recognizes no such thing as an envious, contentious spiritual man. The import of his testimony is that among spiritual believers there is no quarreling. This result flows in part from the fact, already brought to view, that such believers have a renewed mind, the mind of Christ, and consequently *think* in unison. But its true source is the renewed heart. The spiritual man "dwells in love." He has gained the crown of all attainments, the "the bond of perfectness," which is *charity*. Carnal believers may have many of the external gifts of the Spirit; but the spiritual only have that loving heart which "*suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; never faileth.*" 1 Cor. 13 : 4–8. This unquestionably is the grand attainment which divides the spiritual from the carnal believer—the full born son of God from the "babe in Christ." For Paul says: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, *I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;* and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, *I am nothing;* and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, *it profiteth me nothing.*" 1 Cor. 13 : 1–3.

Here are many and great gifts and graces which a man may have and yet not be a son of God. It should be noticed that charity is distinguished not only from gifts of utterance, revelations, and wonder-working faith, but even from that which is commonly accounted charity, viz., benevolence to the poor, and from self-sacrificing devotion. Indeed, any one who will study the definition of charity above quoted, will perceive that it is far from being that outward-bound, bustling quality of character which usually passes for religious benevolence. Its elements are mostly negative. The idea of "doing good" is not very prominent in it, but as Paul says of it in another place, "*it worketh no ill.*" It is just that quality which fits a man to live in social contact with his fellow men, *without giving offense, and without taking offense.* It implies a thorough extinction of selfishness, a perfect appreciation of the interests of others and of the value of peace, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of eternal love.

3. Another characteristic of the spiritual man is *an unquenchable desire of progress.* Paul was certainly a fit representative of the spiritual class. Let us see what was his state of mind. He says: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; . . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead: *not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:* but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren *I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" Phil. 3: 8–15. Was there ever a more vivid expression of God-like ambition! The apostle adds: "LET US, THEREFORE, AS MANY AS BE PERFECT, BE THUS MINDED;" and "thus minded" will every one be who is truly spiritual.

THE END.